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POEMS.

BY

ANGUS FAIRBAIRN,

THE

Scottish Singer.

WITH A PORTRAIT OF THE AUTHOR.

GREENWICH:

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TO

THE ADMIRERS OF BURNS

AND

ALL LOVERS OF SCOTTISH SONG,

THESE

UNCONNECTED AND DESULTORY

VERSES

ARE AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

322

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PREFACE.

THAT the following Poems have been gathered together from various corners of newspapers and other periodicals, and now offered to the public in a form good enough for the very best sort of literature, is owing entirely to the kindness of friends. Whether these friends have done wisely or not, my old patron the Public must determine. In pursuance of my avocation as Lecturer, and singer of Scottish songs, I have never found the Public slow to appreciate a clear expression of poetical thought and feeling: I am therefore confident, if this little volume do not succeed, it simply does not deserve success. One comfort remains for me, at all events—the genuine, unmistakable goodness of heart manifested toward me by men and by women, whose friendship is even more valuable than literary fame.

ANGUS FAIRBAIRN.

COODAILY.

The Argument. — The scene of the first poem extends from the plains of Falkirk, celebrated for its cattle tyst, to the banks of the River Tweed, equally celebrated for its excellent salmon-fishing. The time of action includes three days, and the whole transactions occupy one canto.

POEMS.

COODAILY.

I.

CHIDE not the Muse, ye bright transcendent crew,
If she essay to sing a vision rare
Of roast and boiled, and dainties not a few,
Served up discreetly in the open air,
To one whose stomach dainties seldom knew,
Yet loved he all his lifetime goodly fare,
And in his heart believed that Nature's plan
Is well and wisely rounded by the frying-pan.

II.

Coodaily was this youth, from Falkirk plain,
By birth and lineage a fremit Scot:
His mother oft admonished him in vain,
And strove to wean him from the carnal pot;
She showed how fleshly lusts do end in pain,
And virtue is of temperance begot;
But woe is me, her doctrines he disdained,
For which she oft his slender corpus caned.

III.

She told how Israel, late from bondage free,
Near Sinai did Moses much enrage
By looking back, with lingering longing e'e,
To Egypt's flesh-pots, sin's black heritage,
And how food came from heaven, as you may see
Recorded clearly in the Sacred page :
Coodaily quite the moral overlooked,
By wondering how on earth the heavenly quails were cooked !

IV.

Nor did she fail to set before his mind
The origin of sorrow, death and sin ;
Quoth she, the apple had a toothsome rind,
But, oh, it carried bitterness within.
This son of Eve his fancy then inclined
(For with instruction evil creepeth in)
To speculations on the apple's flavour,
That put creation on its wicked bad behaviour.

V.

To manhood grown, he openly despised
The usual roads that lead to wealth and fame ;
No mental nutriment he greatly prized,
Yet tales of feasts his fancy would inflame ;
The tastes of dishes mentioned he surmised,
And, with a zeal to which young love is tame,
In sacred groves the cookery-books he scanned,
And oft, in rapture's hour, a glutton's meal he planned.

VI.

His tree of knowledge was like greasy pole,
At top of which a leg of mutton's placed,
And upward to that point his youthful soul
For consolation turned whene'er disgraced;
While others strove to win the scholar's goal,
He carefully did cultivate his taste
By earnest process of assimilation
Of all that owed a potable derivation.

VII.

The deeds of Wallace wicht, and Bruce the brave,
In him awoke no patriotic fire:
In heart, I fear, he was a traitor knave,
For English prowess never woke his ire;
To Burns he admiration scarcely gave;
The haggis ode alone did praise inspire:
In sooth he yearned for England's fat domain,
And held his native land in rooted, deep disdain.

VIII.

'Tis hard, I'll own, to love one's native land
When she hath sore oppressed our tender youth,
And never lent to us a helping hand
When we were full of faith and hope and truth.
Ah! many a noble nature's been unmanned
By local prejudice, unkind, uncouth,
That will set up its petrified traditions,
In hopes to bar the immortal soul's transitions.

IX.

Some said his mother, in her brooding time,
Did suffer penury and hunger keen;
And who can tell, in life's primeval clime,
What poor Coodaily's sympathies have been?
We wot that plastic is the hour of prime,
When Nature fashioneth her changeful scene:
I do opine, each well-conducted nation
Should victual well its period of gestation.

X.

'Twere not amiss to make a thoughtful pause,
Enquiring curiously anent the gases
That may have bearing on the very cause
Why some are wise and others perfect asses,
Why some run counter to the moral laws,
And some in virtue touch the angel classes:
I knew a lad whose life was all a blunder
By being prematurely scared by claps of thunder.

XI.

When south winds blew, Coodaily would ensniff
The odour of the south with nose distent,
Till, roused to travel by each fragrant whiff,
He toward England near and nearer went,
Unheeding stream renowned and storied cliff;
No ear to History's thrilling tale he lent:
He crossed the Bannock Burn, a bannock chewing,
Nor gave one single thought to tyranny's undoing;

XII.

For in the yawning ocean of his maw
All nobleness of thought was deep entombed:
"Edina, Scotia's darling seat," he saw,
Where many a flower of chivalry has bloomed,
Where many a gallant King has given law,
And many a martyr's been to glory doomed;
But, shame to say, he passed the city by,
With eating-houses in his mind and eye.

XIII.

Auld Reekie soon he left, and onward fared
Down Galla Water, sweet in ancient song;
But not its melting mood of love he shared;
Yet well he noted, as he trudged along,
The good fat sheep that from the pasture stared;
And oft he sighed, those lovely scenes among,
That he might rest him by the sheltering hill,
And, for one glorious year, of mutton have his fill.

XIV.

He paused awhile at haunted Abbotsford,
For he had learned, from one who well could say,
That here the wizard kept an open board,
And feasted all who passed along that way.
One tear he dropped in memory of its lord,
And up he looked to smokeless chimneys gray:
'Twas not the high-souled tear for genius shed,
But for the generous man who every comer fed.

XV.

Not Melrose, monkish miracle of stone,
Could wile our pilgrim from his southern quest,
Though summer moonlight on the Abbey shone,
Soft shimmering through a dewy silver mist:
Sir Walter says 'tis thus, and thus alone,
Our mortal eyes should view it. As you list;
But, for myself, I much prefer the view
When morning streams each crumbling casement through.

XVI.

Opinions from a master may not be
The very best for all the human clan;
The spirit knows her own, and should be free
To choose, nor fear a fellow creature's ban;
But flesh is craven: few indeed there be
Who take the freedom God has granted man;
The many twist their souls by men's invention,
And yield to fashion, custom and pretention.

XVII.

In certain things, religion for example,
The good old way is safest, not a doubt.
Take our Coodaily as an easy sample:
He went the way by Calvin hollowed out,
A narrow way, yet for a sinner ample
Who means to walk on something firm and stout;
It leads direct to one supreme conclusion,
And saves us from a waste of wild delusion.

XVIII.

And for that faith Coodaily was a sot.
Dost think he was in point of faith remiss?
Ah, no! though much indeed had gone to pot,
He in his bosom warmly cherished this,—
The faith that, if he haply were begot
Predestined heir of grace and happiness,
No power in earth or hell could e'er prevent him
From being blest at last; and this did well content him.

XIX.

Coodaily, once for all, did take his stand
On God's immovable and fixed decree;
"For He who made the ocean and the land,
The heavens, and every thing that in them be,
Doth surely all the ways and means command
That shapeth out our mortal lot," quoth he:
In this he merged the human will of course,
And destiny he took for better and for worse.

XX.

Here I apology most humbly make
For running tilt upon a dissertation
That e'en a well intentioned man may take
Straight to the dreary confines of damnation;
But, since the ass to prophet Balaam spake,
There have been men, of every creed and nation,
Who would attempt His ways to justify, [high.
Whose footstool is the earth, Whose throne is heaven on

XXI.

And as the pupil of the eye doth close
Just in proportion to excess of light,
So do your heavenward gazers oft suppose
The heaven as it appears to their dazed sight,
Though certes they cannot see beyond their nose,
And only take betimes an owlet's flight,
Yet build they systems on the narrow basis
Made by their own defects an inch before their faces.

XXII.

But where's our pilgrim, he we left erewhile
By Melrose Abbey, 'neath the summer moon?
He careless passed that venerable pile,
In hopes to reach the English border soon;
And on his face there played a wistful smile,
To think how many a cowled and shaven loon
Did, in those roofless halls, at ease enjoy
The sure delights that feasting-hours employ.

XXIII.

And oh, dear friends, some charity I crave
For poor Coodaily, as I cannot boast
That his design was either high or brave
In this his journey to the English coast;
He went not forth his fellow-man to save;
Ah, no! to such pursuits the man was lost:
He travelled southward, as before I hinted,
Because in early life his appetite was stinted!

XXIV.

Smile not, contemptuous Fortune's darling dear,
Who aye hast had thy mortal wants supplied;
Thou knowest not the want of worldly gear,
Nor yet for daily bread hast inly sighed:
Oh, mayst thou never shed the scalding tear
For such mean things as provender denied;
And may thy gastric juices, in particular,
Find always wherewithal to keep thy perpendicular.

XXV.

Oh, fie, Coodaily! where's thy Scottish blush?
I see thee grovelling on the English soil,
For whilst we moralized thou mad'st a rush,
And sped thee many an intervening mile;
Now prone beneath the morning's rosy flush,
Thou liest on thy belly, weak and vile,
While tears of joy bedew thy meagre face:
Rise up, thou renegade! thy bonnet blue replace.

XXVI.

Was it for this thy Burns did humbly pray
That day at Coldstream, on the English side,
When he with fervour flung his hat away,
And kneeled in rapture by the murmuring tide?
What doth his young companion Ainsley say,
Who witnessed all with reverence and pride?
He offered up, without the least obstruction,
The best two stanzas of his most admired production.

XXVII.

With strong desire for Scotia's lasting weal,
In sounding verse his orison arose,
That she should be content with oaten meal,
In shape of sowens, parritch, cake or brose;
Then luxury would never on her steal,
And she would be, to all her outward foes,
A wall of fire: the notion is an old one,
But, being well put up, it looks a new and bold one.

XXVIII.

Old notions, finely drawn, make money now,
As witness Tennyson and Martin Tupper:
Whate'er the Muses think, you must allow,
It pays to clutch Pegasus by the crupper;
'Tis something to be sound on change, I vow,
Though with the gods you may not eat your supper.
The poet to the age, like insect to the plant;
And hence the measured flow of artifice and cant.

XXIX.

Rise up, thou bonded thrawl of sense! He sleeps.
Sleep on, Coodaily; take thy quiet rest.
No injured one for thee in sorrow weeps:
Thy shaggy head on England's bosom prest,
Within thy clouded soul there may be deeps
That find in England what for thee is best.
Tweed's murmurs on thy sleeping ear shall steal,
Like flattering invitations to a glorious meal.

XXX.

Oh, river, lovely river, noble Tweed,
Thou living bulwark of the Scottish people,
Preserving still the virtuous northern breed
From organs in the kirk and cross on steeple;
Here stops at once the language and the creed
That round the universe doth intercreeple;
St. George recoils from Tweed's enchanted banks,
As if a hornet's nest were planted in his flanks.

XXXI.

Oh, stream of streams, we are a nation yet,
Our fathers' faith and Doric all intact,
And as I on the Thames by sufferance sit
I'm proud and happy to record the fact;
Still do I see, in drear prophetic fit,
The breaking up of Scotland's ancient pact;
Her bond of brotherhood to me seems failing:
Plum pudding, do thy work! my tears are unavailing.

XXXII.

In shade of ages gone, Coodaily dreamt
A strange outlandish army passed him by;
Some rode on nags and some footweary limpt,
But every face and every eager eye
Strained southward, while their locks unkempt
Did o'er their shoulders, like the sun, drift by;
No breeches had they on, their limbs were hairy,
Each bore a shield of hide, each hand a spear did carry;

XXXIII.

Their language was unknown, yet one could see
The object of this savage inundation :
Starvation glared in every haggard e'e.
These were the fathers of the Scottish nation :
They came from confines of the Irish Sea,
From wilds beyond the furthest Roman station ;
The Tweed ran mud for miles below their trail,
And horrid smells did taint the wholesome gale.

XXXIV.

One band, another, and another still,
Down ages came, with famished interlude ;
One hope each manly countenance did fill,
The hope of plunder and superior food :
This fused in common mould each rover's will,
Scot, Caledonian, Scandinavian rude ;
This fettled up the fittest people going
With pluck and genius charged to overflowing.

XXXV.

Time hath no place in dreams : the ages fled ;
The Saxons, Normanized, have England named ;
The Scots, who erst with glorious Wallace bled
At Bannockburn, have Edward's avarice tamed ;
Six Stewart Kings are numbered with the dead,
And poor Queen Mary murdered and defamed ;
Queen Bess is gone, who scorned the masculine gender,
And England wants a King to govern and defend her.

XXXVI.

Now, Tweed, prepare thy most melodious flow ;
Such precious burthen never o'er thee passed :
He comes on padded palfrey, pacing slow ;
King James approaches, Scotland's Sixth and last :
I hear the Lord's anointed laugh and crow ;
A train behind him, long and lean and vast ;
He quoteth Scripture like a Presbyterian,
And swears in Latin like an old barbarian ;

XXXVII.

His doublet it is buttoned all awry ;
He sits on saddle like a bag of clouts ;
Now doth he roll around a timorous eye,
As round him rise tempestuous yells and shouts,
For England's longed-for Goshen they descry ;
But James in secret harbours certain doubts
Anent the crossing of the land debateable,
For blood and wounds to him were mainly hateable.

XXXVIII.

Ah, could he gather, with prophetic ken,
The upshot of this fated pilgrimage,
Methinks he'd quickly turn him back again,
Or lay him down and die beside the hedge ;
But on he rides through each admiring glen,
The Scottish Solomon, the northern sage,
To turn a leaf in modern English history,
Which to the reader is devoid of mystery.

XXXIX.

Could he foresee his baby Charles's head
Fall, gnashing, in the basket Cromwellite ;
Dunbar and Nasby, strewn with mangled dead ;
The horrid wounds of Worcester's bloody fight ;
His very name detested, banishèd ;—
Would he now caper o'er the downs so light,
Or show so much pedantic ingenuity
To prove the right divine, that most august fatuity ?

XL.

As onward wound the Royal calvacade,
There ran a shudder through the English land ;
It rocked Carnarvon's battled esplanade,
It shook St. Michael on the Cornish strand ;
Prophetic nature felt this lawful raid
Was more than English valour could withstand,
While those who rode and those who had to shank it [it.
Went southward saying, Let the Lord be praised and thank-

XLI.

King Jamie's gone, with all his hopeful train ;
Tweed smiles serenely, dimpling to the sea ;
Except yon lessening dust upon the plain,
No traces of the trail of Royalty.
But, oh, Coodaily writhes with inward pain,
As if his bowels were in extremity :
He sees what none of Jamie's men behold,
A ghostly convoy rearward mustering on the wold !

XLII.

Their squadrons wheel and form on either side,
Two hostile bands, alas! of kindred race;
There, foremost in that eerie, ominous ride,
The fiery Rupert shows his haughty face,
And, on a charger stubborn in its stride,
The grim Protector takes his fated place;
The choosers of the dead prepare their roll;
The Lord in love receive each brave devoted soul!

XLIII.

They're gone, the outcome of the civil war,
A most uncivil looking company;
Cromwell and Rupert, each a guiding star,
Lead hostile legions doomed to disagree,—
A bodiment of what the English are
In plain day-life, and clanking chivalry;
The brewer, who will not be gauged by Kings;
The knight, whose loyalty from his religion springs.

XLIV.

But whence this measured tramp, this solemn drone,
The covenant hosts from Scottish mists unfold?
Old Lesley, with his true blue Scots, comes on
To sell the faithless King for English gold.
Poor Tweed, ashamed, shrinks under rock and stone;
Their song of psalms makes all her currents cold.
Oh, could she draw her torrents from the deep,
And drown the mercenary crew with one indignant sweep!

XLV.

It is observable amongst mankind,
I mean the mankind of our native isle,
That God and gain pervade the nation's mind;
And he who would our annals true compile,
If free from cant, these truths will surely find,
Like stars they shine above the stress and broil;
If passages at times appear romantic,
'Twas but th' acquis'tive pietist run frantic.

XLVI.

Macaulay missed this point, so have the rest
Who, bent on making pictures, dip the pen
In fancy pigments, all of them possessed
With strong desire to please their fellow men:
Your true historian, he should stand confessed
Above the greed of fame that poets ken,
Above the partizan desire to Whig or Tory
Our comprehensive nature-nurtured story.

XLVII.

Were not Coodaily such a wretched thrawl,
By flesh enchained, in sooth a sorry medium,
I'd make him from the teeming past recal
A faithful history, yet devoid of tedium;
Each motive I'd lay open to you all;
Each character full length, as you had need o'em,
From times anterior to the Goths and Romans
Down to the present People's House of Commons.

XLVIII.

But higher than the spring no stream will rise;
Of sow's ear ne'er was made a silken purse,
Nor would I any man the attempt advise,
Unless he means to generate a curse;
Let us be moderate in our enterprise,
And thank our stars the matter is'nt worse;
One-half of all our mortal care and trouble
Comes out of making human nature carry double.

XLIX.

The back is for the burden all must bear;
For thee I suffer, thou for me hast pain;
That symbol of atonement thou dost wear,
Sweet lady, bodes thy wretched sister's gain;
If she be down and soiled her robe once fair,
She haply saved thine from a deeper stain:
In wearing of the cross be kind and true,
And think what suffering may have been thy due.

L.

If this be preaching, oh, my 'Telegraph,'
The dire contagion's due to thee alone;
Though 'Tomahawkers' at thee jibe and laugh,
Yet great thou art when case of hardship's on;
In spite of all their badinage and chaff,
The heart of England quivers to thy moan,
The injured find in cash some restoration,
And thou a stronger flow of virtuous circulation.

LI.

Some flowers the tenderest handling wont abide,
And these in Virtue's garden choice and chief;
And when the blazon flieth far and wide
That one for heart of love hath come to grief,
It might be best the whole affair to hide;
Let Virtue in herself find pure relief;
But, as my 'Telegraph' can well declare,
The very best of people can't subsist on air.

LII.

Time, down the grooves of change, I hear thee ring
(The fancy is mechanical, not mine);
The spinning-jenny I have heard her sing,
When cotton-manufacture was divine;
For early worm the thrush bestirs his wing,
And spiders feel along the trembling line
In hopes to catch the flimsy as it flies;
So in their generation do the worldly wise.

LIII.

Behold the last heroic Norland dash!
Six thousand Highlanders, in tartan kilts,
Through Tweed, led on by Charlie, forward splash:
The hills resound their hoochs and bagpipe lilts;
Though they are short of caution and of cash,
The pulse of honour beats against their hilts;
They enter England, sword in hand, right fairly,
Resolved to have a regular stand-up fight for Charlie.

LIV.

Poor Prince! lead back thy brave ones to Bræmar;
No man can fight the spirit of his age;
I see the blood-red setting of thy star
Where dark Colloden stains the historic page;
Yet onward show them what the clansmen are
When battle's tempest round the tartans rage;
With pibroch shrill and flash of bright claymore,
Strike for the honoured names thy fathers loved of yore!

LV.

Those horrid bagpipes! foemen hate their yell,
From Preston Pans to India's farthest clime;
Yet heroes love thy skirling notes full well
When victory marks the vengeful course of time;
Oh, then thy music hath a glorious swell;
At Lucknow's 'leager 'twas a note sublime;
It rose above despair, so clear and gaily:
By all that's dear to fame, 'twill surely wake Coodaily!

LVI.

Ah, no! uneasy rolls his sleepy head;
The fluttering tartans vanish in the mist;
He groans and turns him on the grassy mead,
As if a nightmare sat upon his chest.
Lo! Peace sits down beside him with her reed;
She pipes the strain that gourmand loveth best;
Lambs 'gin to frisk around, the pretty creatures;
Mint-sauce bedews their interesting features!

LVII.

They're roasted nicely, ready to a turn ;
Ah, how shall now this record be received ?
The times are sceptical, and prone to spurn
The miracles that once were well believed ;
But though the wrath of sceptics 'gainst me burn,
So long as I am not myself deceived,
I'll write Coodaily's vision in this rhyme,
Though not a soul believe it to the end of time !

LVIII.

Thou'rt used to miracles ; thou'rt one thyself !
Whence cam'st thou ? wherefore ? whither art thou bound ?
There is no printed wonder on thy shelf
So strange, so far descended, so profound ;
Before thy books began, some luckless elf
For thee was moiling in the virgin ground :
Think what a mystery has been thy feeder
To make thee what thou art, beloved gentle reader !

LXIX.

'Tis all miraculous, this passing show ;
The scope and meaning who can comprehend ?
The devotees of truth may something know
While they in patient labours lowly bend ;
The revelation comes in silent flow
To humble souls that seek no selfish end,
But shuns the self-asserting blatant preacher,
Who makes the pulpit now a somewhat sorry teacher.

LX.

Yes! on the warlock Tweed's enchanted banks:
Around Coodaily came a wond'rous sight,
By which the Egyptian transformation pranks
Were in the race of wonder distanced quite,—
The blood that, 'stead of water, flowed in tanks;
The rod that turned a snake, with wicked spite,
And swallowed up his brothers with avidity,
But could not conquer Pharoah's blind stupidity.

LXI.

Soon as the roasted lambs began to frisk,
The steam of cooking up the valley rose;
Winds, warm and wanton, round the sleeper whisk;
They fill the extended portals of his nose;
And, ere the winker of your eye could glisk,
The Tweed began to run of Athol brose;
The rocks, that stemmed the broad mellifluous flow,
Were sugar, thrice refined, as pure as driven snow;

LXII.

The shelving banks were oaten cake so crisp,
That dipped to kiss the mealy-mouthèd tide;
But, since gastronomy began to lisp,
Was ever seen such salmon weltering wide?
They leap and shine in air, like will-o'-wisp,
Or here and there in graceful maze they glide;
Such fish the keenest fisher never fished,
For they were smoking, ready to be dished!

LXIII.

On Scottish side great haggis hills arise;
Sheeps' heads for rocks, and trotters to conform;
Scotch collops, cockieleekie, momiplies,
With buns piled up as high as Cairngorm;
The antlered deer, whose venison supplies
The thew and muscle that can brave the storm;
Unheard-of cogues of parritch, seas of milk,
Booricks of scones, and cookies of that ilk;

LXIV.

Shortbread in craigs, with sweetie-mottled brows,
And marmalade from song-beloved Dundee;
Cheese made from crummie's milk, and eke from yows,
And finnan haddies from the Northern Sea;
The whisky, that with genius man endows,
And ale that oils the tongue like lawyer's fee,
With many a mingled artful appetizer,
The chronicle of which would make you none the wiser.

LXV.

Ah, there, Coodaily, clearly thou'rt a fool
To leave a land so rich in condiment;
Perverted sense hath led thee, like a mule,
And put a gulf between thee and content;
Recross! thou never canst remark the rule,—
The discontented man must bide his bent;
And, as you make your bed, so must you lie,
Though round about your pillow, death and ruin cry.

LXVI.

He smiles; he turns his back upon this dish,
Like one who hath a richer choice in view,
And, for the present, hath no ardent wish
To settle to the nearest roast or stew,
But plays a little with the soup and fish,
And whets his wakened appetite anew
With sips of sherry, as he gently hovers
To mark the uprising of the coming covers.

LXVII.

Then, south, upon his vision fair, uprist
A smoking mountain ridge of plum pudding.
Right through his stomach rapture shot, I wist,
As fire to quick electric touch doth spring.
Oh, spirit of this spread! do thou assist
The Muse, in melting music, here to sing
The bliss a man may feel, in fancy swimming,
When reason's gone to sleep and sense is fondly dreaming.

LXVIII.

From childhood this unrivalled pudding glowed
Deep in Coodaily's heart's remotest core;
An English child him once a morsel showed,
And gave to taste a crumb and nothing more;
But from that moment, like ambition's goad,
His stomach's memory that remembrance bore;
And now his life in joy had nearly ended,
To see his dearest youthful hopes transcended.

LXIX.

First raptures o'er, more calm he did survey
Old England's edibles, in state outlaid ;
Nor cast he one short glance across the way,
To haggis hill in rivalry displayed.
Already have I said, in this essay,
That which no doubt his inclination swayed,
Though still the haggis is but sorry fare,
When with plum pudding we its barbarous gout compare.

LXX.

This mine opinion is ; nor will I flinch
From what is writ, for any man alive :
I don't desire on others' ground to trench ;
Nor will I compass, study, or contrive
My neighbour's likings unto mine to clinch,
Nor under his, for fear or favour, dive :
I'll freely live, and freely shall I sing
Of all the pudding race plum pudding is the king.

LXXI.

I know in this with Burns I don't agree ;
I know this doctrine Scotsmen wont receive,
For in my native land there thousands be
Tied head and tail to honest Robin's sleeve ;
But, since my youth, I never yet could see
The good in saying what I don't believe :
Truth love I more, true Robin none the less,
When I mine own opinion candidly confess.

LXXII.

This, say-all with-all, spreads apace of late,—
Since knowledge has been known so well to pay,
Conformity in reason serves the State;
The Kirk, I dinna ken; perhaps it may;
One thing it gives us, one dull level prate;
The press supplies the pabulum each day;
One style pervades our mind, and eke our breeches:
And, if you be yourself, society impeaches.

LXXIII.

With all his faults, Coodaily had a taste;
It was his own; for this him I revere:
One single thought he never yet did waste
On what his neighbours wore from year to year;
His outward form was decently encased
In leathern vestments made for wear and tear;
The paunch was ample, in anticipation
Of future plenty and a corporation.

LXXIV.

Roast beef, arise! Lo! in the front upheaves,
In glorious majesty, the good sirloin,
With ruddy berries decked and holly-leaves,
As when around him flows the Christmas wine.
My common sense it ofttimes sorely grieves
To see those scribblers on the Saxon line
Pretend to prove its greatness from its laws:
These wilful wantons put the effect before the cause.

LXXV.

What law will e'er take root in barren soil?
What legislature sit with famished maw?
An empty stomach who will e'er beguile
By mumbling musty maxims 'twixt the jaw?
Just as a people's fed, so is the style,
The fabric, form and spirit of their law:
In Somerset, where Alfred lived and flourished,
The bacon's excellent, the cattle finely nourished.

LXXVI.

A lusty nation never was begot
On muslin-kale or vegetable broth;
Old England's valour, wisdom, and what not,
May all be placed upon the table-cloth;
Without the use of spit and pan and pot,
To say what she might be I would be loth;
Her laws, her Parliament, her lords and kings,
In roast and pudding hath their source and springs.

LXXVII.

Awe sweeps across Coodaily's raptured face,
In presence of this most august display;
His instinct fully comprehends the case,
For majesty the most obtuse will sway;
Upon his knees behold him in his place;
This is his Magna Charta: who shall say
The man is more bewitched than those who sprawl,
In front of wooden thrones, in many a gilded hall?

LXXVIII.

The Epping sausage here the scene adorns,
While capons, all in cluster, frizzle free.
Lives there a man who fowl and sausage scorns?
I can't respect that man, whate'er his creed may be.
Not here the pigeon sad her lone love mourns,
But, closed in pasty, mixes pleasantly
With that which once was ox, but now is steak,
Here curiously commingled for the stomach's sake.

LXXIX.

Of savoury pies there was not any stint,
With Melton Mowbray, known to fame and me;
The Cornish, that hath sorts of goodness in't,
But doth not always with its friends agree:
Excepting these, I have not time to hint
At half the number or variety;
A stream of double stout took up the tale,
And, with a foaming murmur, filled the dale.

LXXX.

Ah, woe betide! a sea of turtle soup
Came steaming up beneath Coodaily's nose:
Like one designed to make a final swoop,
He started wildly from his deep repose,
And, with one plunge and one unearthly whoop,
Straight on his head to mother earth he goes:
His dream was broken, so alas! his head,
And there he lay, like one completely dead.

LXXXI.

A humble Scot, returning from the field,
Whose cottage stood upon the Scottish side,
In passing did to soft compassion yield;
He raised Coodaily, stemmed the crimson tide,
For nose and chin of cuticle were peeled;
On his gustative bump a wound lay wide:
The peasant lifted up the wounded man,
And, homeward staggering, with his helpless burden ran.

LXXXII.

The wife with trembling hands undid the door,
And helped her husband, with humane intent,
Spread down a quilt upon the earthen floor,
Laid out the patient like a monument,
Stiff as a poker; ne'er was seen before
A man alive and yet so nearly spent:
They chafed his brow, his hands in water laved;
But not by means like these Coodaily's life was saved.

LXXXIII.

A pot of kale was simmering on the crook;
It overboiled and spluttered in the flame:
Coodaily ope'd his eye, with potward look,
Which cheerèd much the husband and the dame;
She seized the ladle from its wonted hook,
A reeming bicker filled, and to the patient came:
Then up he sat, set on with dexterous spoon,
Nor did he say a grace, the greedy thankless loon!

LXXXIV.

No invitation from the worthy pair
Could make him rest, as I have heard them tell;
He looked like one who has no time to spare,
But must attend the warning dinner-bell;
He never thanked them for their timely care,
But vanished in the gloamin o'er the fell:
'Tis thought in England still he walks, a ghost,
In hopes to find that feast, to him for ever, ever lost!

LXXXV.

Go, little Poem, forth of Greenwich go!
Where friends and home, through toilsome years,
There's many worthy people here, I know, [I've found.
Who say I should have taken higher ground,
For eating is a habit vulgar, low,
And not poetical nor yet profound;
But at their social board I gained the impression
Their practice don't at all agree with their profession.

LXXXVI.

Then, much-respected reader, fare thee well!
Our fathers felt that benediction's force;
But howsoe'er you fare, where'er you dwell,
I hope you'll never be compelled to eat your horse!
Though poets their Pegasus slay and sell;
The practice wisdom cannot well endorse;
If full, enjoy in thankful moderation;
If empty, may the Lord send speedy consolation!

ON THE CENTENARY OF BURNS.

(*Spoken at St. Martin's Hall, on Tuesday Evening, January 25th*, 1859).

SCOTLAND, her stern cold eye bedew'd with tears,
This day looks backward through a hundred years,
To yon wee cottage on the banks o' Doon,
Whose hearth still bienly cheers the wintry noon;
And to that spot each manly heart returns,
On this the natal day of Robert Burns.
Blessed be his rest, in Alloway kirkyard,
Who rear'd that cot, and poortith's evils dared,
Who honour's rugged course unwearied ran,
And bore unstained the dignity of man.
And sacred be the sward that haps her head,
The first fond mistress of that clay-built shed,
Who fired her first-born's heart with Scotia's lay,
The slogan of the old heroic day,
And rocked his cradle to the pastoral strain
Of simple days, that ne'er return again.
As when light breaks, the laverock upward springs,
Still higher soaring as he sweeter sings,
So sung our poet, artless, clear and strong,

And age to age the heartfelt notes prolong.
This day, in every land, in every clime,
They meet to honour one who, in his time,
Was true to man, to love, to Nature true,
And never from his path of pride withdrew,
And never, never stooped to mammon's power,
But lived as he had sung, until his dying hour.
How doth his spirit scorn the hireling band,
Six hundred strong, who, by great Grove's command,
This day have strain'd their eager wits to raise
The stipulated money's worth of praise!
Poor as I am, 'twould be no work of mine,
On such a day, to serve at mammon's shrine.

Since Coila crown'd her ploughman-bard with bays,
Three English kings have number'd out their days,
And England now, in pith of sense and worth,
Ranks first and foremost monarch of the earth,
For she hath wisely scorn'd the tinsel show,
The false distinction whence discord doth grow,
The gaudy stamp of merit, dead and gone,
And placed her trust in living worth alone;
Laid her sure empire on the Maker's plan,
The universal brotherhood of man.
'Tis well the name of Burns to us is dear,
'Tis well his words of wisdom charm our ear;
That people must be chief the earth's among
Who march unto the measure of his song;

All generous souls with us those scenes renew,
That rise so fresh and fair on fancy's view,—
The "braes o' bonnie Doon;" the groves of Ayr;
Montgomery's streams, to him sae fu' o' care;
The Leglin Wood, where Wallace wont to bide
When treachery and death were hounded side by side;
The Cassilis downans, where, on Halloween,
The fairy elves danc'd o'er the moon-lit green,
When anxious lovers, fain their fate to trace
In mystic rites, met warlocks face to face;
The harvest-eve, when first love's thrilling joy
With sweet delicious ardour filled the boy;
The upland field, where, in prophetic hour,
His ploughshare crushed the crimson-tippèd flower;
The sacred Nith, where, from the worlds on high,
One "lingering star" beamed on his wak'rife eye,
And Mary, from her "blissful place of rest,"
Shed hallow'd memories on his anguish'd breast;
Lincluden's towers, where oft, as gloamin gray
Stole o'er the distant hills of Galloway,
In pensive walk, when life drew near its close,
Forgathering glories on his vision rose,
Far, far beyond earth's carking cares and woes,
Beck'ning him onward to sublime repose;
Mossgiel and Ellisland, each well-known spot
Dear for his sake, and ne'er to be forgot.
All social souls do now with us recall
The heartwarm love he felt for one and all,—

The friendship true, the fond fraternal glow,
The pitying eye that wept for want and woe,
The kindly hand which tenderly withdrew
Poor frailty's failings from censorious view,
The love of woman, joy of joys supreme,
Soul of his song, his life's most hallow'd theme.

Away with narrow bounds of creed to-day;
They love not Burns who own the bigot's sway,
They love him not who wish a line unsung,
That tears of spite from canting rascals wrung,
When his keen satire broke their dull defence,
And laid them bare, the scorn of common sense.

Scotland! thy triumphs have been grandly told
Before the world, on fame's fair page unrolled;
Yet must they merge in glory you have won
In name of thine inspired immortal son.
Then, by that name which hypocrites detest,
But by the honest-hearted loved the best,
Avoid, oh aye avoid, the scrimpèd line
Which seeks to circumscribe the love divine;
Add to thy clear intelligence and truth
The generous faith, the charity, and ruth,
The manly pride which every meanness spurns,
The catholic grandeur of thy poet—Burns!

THE CAMERA AND THE BRUSH.

The leaves were falling in the lanes of Lee,
The sun went westward with a watery e'e,
There was a sough of winter in the air,
And flocks of birds flew twittering here and there;
There was a sense of sorrow in the scene,
As if rememb'ring what had lately been,
And boding changes more and more severe,—
The speechless sadness of the dying year.
As I, in unison with Nature's mood,
Walked pensively beside the waning wood,
I spied a little cot beside the stream;
Its chimneys caught the sun's withdrawing gleam.
Within I went, at once intent on rest,
For well I knew it for a painter's nest,—
A place where simple souls might welcome find,
And be at ease in body and in mind.
The painter, wife, and children were at home;
They glowered at me as I had been a gnome;
All silent, not a single member stirr'd.
I sat me down, and never said a word.
With that a Camera and Lens complete
Stood forth on three long straddling pointed feet,

And challenged an old Brush to hold debate
On subject more abstruse than Church or State.
The Brush, though scrubb'd, and worn in every hair,
Had something high and haughty in its air,
A stubborn sense of consequence and pride,
That seemed to say, "Whom have we here beside?"
It eyed the Camera with deep disdain,
Which up and spoke in this uncivil strain :—

"Thou stiff-necked, stumpy, sentimental scrub,
Torn from the dirty hide of gutter grub!
How darest thou cock thy saucy birse at me?
I'll make a faithful photograph of thee,
That all these honest folks may plainly see—"

"Hold!" said the Brush, "thou soulless, heartless stick,
As void of fancy as a mason's brick!
Hence! square-jawed photographic trash;
Not here they'll listen to thy balderdash."

"I'll make them listen," Camera replied;
"Too long you've scumbled in your dirty pride,
Confounding nature, muddling every grace,
Like devil risen from the nether place.
False, freakish still, with silly, selfish aim,
Aye, begging foolish praise and flimsy fame,
Till I upon you glanc'd this child of light,
And put thy false pretences all to flight."

"Pretensions!" quoth I. Said the Brush, irate,
"Do'st thou pretend to truth, mechanic pate!
Thou sun-struck wretch, that every beauteous day
Set'st forth all objects in the poor-house gray.
Howe'er the glorious changes of the sky,
Reflected clear in Nature's loving eye,
Still, colour-blind, thou pokes thine eye abroad,
And libels Nature, blasphemes Nature's God;
No child of light art thou, full well I wot,
Thou optical illusion, misbegot!
Thou suits this sceptic age, the truth to tell,
Purblind and atheistic cub of hell,
Believing nothing that thou can'st not see,
And hence thy ignorance and spite at me."

"Ha! ho!" laughed Camera; "I've got you out;
Well, 'pon my Lens, there cannot be a doubt
You've caught the jargon of the mystagogues;
Why don't you make a bargain with the rogues
To paint their thin-skin'd faces, one and all,
Pinched, jealous, yellow as a monkey's gall?
I'll warrant all their inward pangs you know;
Have felt for years the envious wretches' throe;
Have worshipped self, like them, with earnest zeal,
And strained your nerves to picture what you feel;
Have called your paltry feelings genius, truth;
Your wretched daubs the works of Art forsooth:

And as the honest world was not inclined
To call you great, you sat you down and whined."

" Thou cocktailed, wooden-headed, three-legged ass !
'Tis well they've mounted thee in triple brass,
For surely impudence procured thy birth,
And gave thy ugly form to wondering earth,—
A monster meant to multiply deceit,
And never let fair truth and beauty meet.
Last week, no less, I near was driven wild ;
I saw thy portrait of my master's child.
A portrait ? Lord ! a something ghastly white,
Clutched to a chair and standing bolt upright,
As if thy hideous face and one-eyed stare
Had struck her lifeless as the helpless chair..
Ah, me ! where was the dimpling rounded cheek,
So eloquent of health, so downy sleek,
Like luscious peach upon a summer tree ;
The lips like coral of the Indian Sea ;
The eye, in whose soft spirit-thrilling rays
The soul of colour ever, ever plays ?
All gone, all gone ; a rigid form instead,
With icy features, pallid as the dead.
Is it for this that I am flung aside,
And thou exalted in thy upstart pride ?
Confound thy lens, baths, boxes, slides, and all
Dark dodges, tricks, that sneak behind the wall,

By which you now delude a gaping world ;
I'll see you yet to swift destruction hurled."

" Nay, poor old Brush, don't damn us out and out,"
Quoth Camera, a smile upon his snout ;
" Let's compromise, and hand-in-hand we'll go,
To give to future times this passing show.
Be mine to draw the forms of Nature true,
Be thine to fix each lovely fleeting hue ;
In us shall genius and mechanics join
To reach an excellence superb, divine."

" Divine ! " cried Brush, each bristle tense with rage ;
" Give patience, heaven ! sustain my injured age !
I spit upon thee, Camera, machine !
And, rather than to thee in friendship lean,
I'll hide my head for ever in the dust,
And die in dignity, if die I must.
Go hence, and leave me faithful to my trust."

What more they might have said 'twere hard to say ;
But now the kettle had its wilful way :
It set its lid to clatter, flirted in the fire.
Up rose the dame, up rose the sons and sire,
And, laughing, gave me welcome ; round and round
The little dog barked joyful to the sound.

With them I laughed and joked, and spent the night;
Nor did I note the minutes in their flight
Till midnight bells, amongst the lanes of Lee,
Did ring me home with kindly social glee.

THE SABBATH MORNING VISION.

When Lewisham was fast asleep,
One summer Sabbath morn,
I wander'd forth, all by myself,
To see the blooming thorn.
The slanting beams of early day
Came shimmering through the trees;
The lark was up o'er Rushey Green,
In wholesome morning breeze;
And there I met an aged man;
He seemed but ill at ease;

His hair was silvery as the clouds
That floated high o'er head;
And pallid was his wrinkled face,
Like one that's well nigh dead;
He barred my passage o'er the stile;
I could not choose but stand;

He bent upon me cold bright eyes,
As one that bears command;
The flowers were underneath his foot,
And a cross was in his hand.

"Where goest thou, my son?" he said;
"Doth sin thy heart oppress?
Hath conscience roused thee from thy bed?
To me thy soul confess.
There is no voice in bird or flower
To sooth the inward grief;
The priest alone, by word of power,
Can bring thy soul relief,
And that he can, at any hour,
To sinner, e'en the chief.

Long time hath England been estranged
From priestly rule, I trow;
And, in the vengeful course of time,
What do we witness now?
Like prodigal she doth return,
In abject humble case,
To where the votive candles burn,
In Rome's appointed place,—
The church where evermore is found
The ways and means of grace.

Hark! even now along the vale
Sweet rings the matin bell;
It falls in music on the graves
Of sacred Ladywell.
As Ravensbourne to ocean runs,
And backward comes in rain,
When, 'neath the scorching summer suns,
Flocks faint upon the plain,
So shall the church her blessings pour
On this fair land again.

Now, son, confess, thy weary soul
Would fain have peace and rest.
Come; Mother Church, with holy joy,
Will take thee to her breast;
There shalt thou, free from doubt and fear,
Find comfort in thy day;
And, when the night of death shall come,
Absolved thou'lt pass away,
And sleep with saints, within our pale,
In consecrated clay."

To this I wist not what to say,
For sin is hard to bear,
And promised pardon in mine eyes
Had brought the grateful tear.

At length I said, "It ill becomes
A sinful soul to slight
The counsel that hath come unsought,
Like the dawning of the light;
And I'll confess my soul is dark
As winter's deepest night.

But by yon sun, thou reverend man,
That lights this earth below,
I fear, I fear no mortal can
The peace of God bestow.
In coverts fellow men have reared
The coward soul may hide;
But I must bow before His wrath,
The day of trial 'bide;
For only to the Father's grace
Can I my soul confide."

The vision frowned and left my sight;
I knelt me down and prayed,
As if temptation had been there,
In reverend form arrayed.
I rose; the lark sang sweeter still;
Fresh from the dewy earth
Ten thousand thousand happy things
Came glancing from their birth,
And I did join my heart to theirs
In Nature's May-day mirth.

WHERE IS THE LONDON MUSE?

Where is the London Muse?
Where is she dreaming?
Out on the Thames,
When the morning is beaming?
Out on the river,
When eve is declining?
Touching the heart
With a glory refining?

Where is the London Muse?
Where is she singing
Comfort, where anguish
The bosom is wringing?
Tenderly cheering
The children of sorrow,
Raising the hopes
Of a brighter to-morrow?

Where is the London Muse?
Where is she preaching
Curses on all
Who are false in their teaching?

Blasting the vices,
  Though lofty in station,
Branding the bad
  In the eye of creation?

Where is the London Muse?
  Where is she sighing
Over the innocent
  'Midst of us dying?
Lifting the lowly,
  And making her song
Fearful to folly
  And fearful to wrong?

Where is the London Muse?
  Where shall you find her?
There, with burlesque
  And the follies behind her,
Smirking and smudging
  In courtezan train,
Sharing with pimps
  The disgrace and the gain.

Where is the London Muse?
  There she is, roaring,
Where music halls,
  In their vicious outpouring,

Muddle Minerva;
No longer censorious,
She mingles delighted
In ribaldry's chorus.

Where is the London Muse?
Where little Sally
Capers in tights
In the front of the ballet;
Where, in the front
Of the opera-stall,
Virtue is murdered
That Titiens may squall.

Shame on the London Muse!
Shame on her story!
She who should emulate
Milton's proud glory,
She who in beauty
And brightness should stand
Songstress of all
That is noble and grand.

A MEETING OF "FRIENDS."

THE sun went down behind Moncrief,
The Tay was murmuring by;
The woods were silent, every leaf,
Between me and the sky,—

Between me and the amber west
The firs stood silent all,
Like men to worship God addressed
Who in his presence fall;

The song of lark was in the light,
The singer lost above,
So fain, sweet bird, to sing "good night"
To the source of light and love.

And I was with a silent band,
Who waited on the Lord;
We reverend sat with folded hand,
Nor sang nor spoke a word.

The gloamin deepened on each face,
The silence grew intense,
Till expectation filled the place,
And raised to heaven each sense.

At length, when every heart was filled,
The spirit silence broke;
The voice through every bosom thrill'd;
We knew the Lord had spoke.

But not by mortal pen or tongue
Can mortal man declare;
The music in our ears that rung,
It might be praise or prayer.

It might be such as spirits hear
When mortal pains are past,
When they, devoid of doubt and fear,
Rejoice in God at last.

The music ceased; but comfort staid,
As if we just had heard,
From Him to whom we oft have prayed,
A sweet consoling word.

Now shone the stars above Moncrief,
The Tay was murmuring by,
The summer dew on every leaf,
The lark had left the sky.

The meeting parted as begun,
In friendship's sweet accord,
For it is good that every one
Should wait upon the Lord.

AN EPISTLE TO A DISCONTENTED SCHOLAR.

Thou grumbling, growling, thankless loon!
Here's variations on the tune
That ye've been fiddling, late and soon,
Since e'er I've ken'd ye;
No change in earth, or sun, or moon,
Will ever mend ye.

God's gifted you, both tooth and nail,
To cope with fortune's changefu' gale,
Tack, reef, and steer, and trim the sail,
To win the port;
And what would make a thousand fail,
To you is sport.

And see you now on manhood's shore,
Enriched with life's most precious ore,
Health, friendship, freedom, classic lore,
And wit at will;
With all your senses to the fore
And power of skill.

Yet if some lassie glance agee,
Or some auld maiden, o'er her tea,
But airt a crooked word at thee,
Fizz! cocktail hot;
Like red wud bull out o'er the lea,
You're off like shot.

Whate'er our lot, whate'er our age,
Prince, beggar, king, fool, seer, or sage,
A certain warfare must we wage,
A constant strife;
You know 'tis writ on every page
Of human life.

And do you hope to 'scape the gall
That's mixed for one and mixed for all,
And have the honey till it pall
Upon your taste,—
The only one, since Adam's fall,
King o' the feast?

Yon bush, that on each waving spray
Hangs forth a rose to greet the day,
Sweet bending in the morn of May,
Roots deep in earth;
And things more vile than tongue can say
Give beauty birth.

So let thy soul break forth in flower;
Though death and darkness round thee lower,
Show ignorance the grace and power
That shine within;
Make life a sweetly-blossomed bower,
All hearts to win.

But vain are all my wishes true
Till love's soft spirit master you,
And gives your mind a purpose new,
A nobler bent,
And on you ope a grander view
Of life's intent.

God grant, before your youth depart,
Sweet woman's love inflame your heart,
And to your gifts the grace impart
That giveth life,—
The sun of learning, genius, art,—
An honest wife.

MONA'S COMPLAINT.

O ! " Land o' Cakes " and Faither Bull !
Your Mona's heart wi' grief is full ;
Her sighs ye may at Liverpool
Or Glasgow hear.
Well may she night and day cry dool ;
Her end draws near.

In vain the amorous Irish Sea
Clings round her breast wi' glimmering e'e ;
In vain her ancient sisters three
Their arms extend :
Her HOPE has turned her enemy,
And sworn her end.

He's sworn a deadly solemn aith
That he shall tax her to the death,
To buy some toys and baby-claith
For Royal service.
To be disloyal she'd be laith ;
But Lord preserve us !

For fifty years, and something mair,
They've pickit her wee pouches bare;
She's ne'er had three bawbees to spare;
The mair's the sin:
There's mony a thing she's wanting sair,
Baith oot and in.

She hasna loom or cotton-mill,
Nor ony engineering skill,
Except yon mine aneath the hill,
And here and there
She brews a drap o' nappy yill
To ease her care.

I'm free, upon my saul, to swear
That for the space o' saxty year
She hasna smuggled guid or gear,
In a' her coast;
I'm vexed I should be forced here
Sic things to boast.

And noo the stranger's simmer plack
Is a' she gets for board and back;
And yet he'd do, alack, alack!
The very thing
That will gar strangers in a crack,
For aye tak wing.

Her sea-views then may close their 'een,
Soon wad her streets be growing green,
And sea-birds skirl where once had been
Hearths bien and braw;
Her cottages and villas clean
In ruins fa'.

Wi' twa legs kneeling on the shore,
And ane aye kicking as of yore,
See Mona earnestly implore
Her very life,
A' trembling to the very core,
'Neath gauger's knife.

Dear daddy John! be kind and leel;
Draw aff the murdering gauger cheil:
I trow that ye can want fu' weel
Wee Mona's mite;
Sae grant her a complete repeal,
And set her right.

SONG.

As I cam o'er the broomy knowe
I met the Doctor's Jenny O;
The morning flush'd, the roses blush'd,
But nane sae sweet and bonnie O.
The Sabbath bells began to sough
As Heav'n on earth was smirkin' O;
But we sat doon amang the broom,
And clean forgot the kirkin' O.

And hey the broom, the bonnie broom,
The broom it blossoms fairly O;
My blessings on its gowden crown,
It bields the lovers rarely O.

We werna' there for ony ill;
We didna' mean to tarry O;
The laverock whistlin' o'er the hill,
Our wish aboon might carry O.
But what will Doctor Wylie say—
The thought it makes me eerie O—
For breaking o' the Sabbath day,
And courtin' o' his dearie O?

And hey the broom, the bonnie broom,
The broom it blossoms fairly O;
My blessings on its gowden crown,
It bields the lovers rarely O.

Her whisper'd words were mair to me
Than a' the Doctor's preachin' O,
The glancin' o' her heavenly e'e
Than his diviner teachin' O.
The will to bless was beaming there,
And hope through grace ascending O,
And faith that never fears the day
When love will have an ending O.

And hey the broom, the bonnie broom,
The broom it blossoms fairly O;
My blessings on its gowden crown,
It bields the lovers rarely O.

THE HOPE OF THE FAMILY.

A WEE straw hat and ribbon blue;
A wee short coat and breekies;
A pipe exposed to public view,
Betwixt his pale wee cheekies;

A wee bit self-conceited brain;
His wee hands in his pockets;
Athwart his wee bit heart a chain,
Wi' charms and coins and lockets;

A taste for smudge, a taste for slang,
A taste for low conniving;
And where life's rankest tide rins strang
You'll find the creature diving.

Yet he's been trained as gentles should;
No art has been neglected
To mak him able, wise, and good,
And useful and respected.

And here's the upshot o' our toil,
And thus are we rewarded
For forcing fruit frae wretched soil
That Nature has discarded.

THE MARYGOLD.

Wee freckled marygold,
  Blooming in my garden plot;
Homilies manifold
  Readeth thou to me, I wot.

Weary walls surround thee,
  Warding off the winsome air;
Cold shadows bound thee;
  Little sunshine is thy share.

Grateful little marygold,
  Thanks to me are scarcely due;
I did plant thee in the cold,
  Where the blinks o' heav'n are few.

Still, as sweet and beautiful
  As thy tender form can hold,
Unto me so dutiful,
  All thou hast thou dost unfold.

O little marygold,
  Would that *I* could lift my face,
Saying, "So do I unfold
  As my God hath given space."

HAVE YOU ANY TIME?

Have you any time,
  Have you any leisure,
For a little rhyme,
  For a little measure,
For a little song
  Of a little treasure?
It shall not be long
  If it be your pleasure.

Polly is her name,
  This her habitation,—
Greenwich, known to fame
  For an observation.
She was born in June,
  'Neath some constellation
Having mirth and tune
  For its celebration.

Greenwich people say
  Heaven has the merit;
For the child is gay,
  As she doth inherit;

And her pretty voice
  And her merry spirit
Cannot but rejoice;
  So they do infer it.

In your house at home,
  (Pardon me the folly),
Harry, Dick, or Tom,
  Have you such a Polly,
Such a merry fay
  Thus to make you jolly,
Singing care away,
  Care and melancholy?

SONG.

KATIE OF ST. ALBAN'S.

Katie loves the lily flower
  Katie loves the day;
Sweet is the dew on the bonnie lily flower,
  And sweet upon St. Alban's
  The sunny mornings play;
And oh, I love St. Alban's dearly.

Katie she is guileless,
Katie she is fair;
Sweet is the dew on the bonnie lily flower,
And in her beaming, trustful eyes
You read her goodness there,
The grace of heav'n shining so sincerely.

Katie makes St. Alban's
Blessed to us all;
Sweet is the dew on the bonnie lily flower,
More than all the saints that lie
Within the abbey wall;
For beauty touches reverence so nearly.

Katie hears the melodies
Mortals only know;
Sweet is the dew on the bonny lily flower
When the heart is full of love,
And pure as driven snow;
And oh, I love the little orphan dearly.

ON THE DEATH OF A KENTISH MAN,

Who, in order to save his home from ruin, undertook a dangerous job in a deep well, and perished in the discharge of duty.

Ye men who wear Victoria's cross,
For deeds of valour bright,—
One of yourselves, obscure, unknown,
Hath sunk in endless night.

Not where, in conquest's ringing ears,
The notes of triumph swell;
Not in the battle's martial rage,
'Midst comrades brave he fell.

Yet in a cause as good as thine
He yielded up his breath;
With courage true as one of you,
For home he met his death.

The direst foe is not the foe
That meets you face to face,
With weapon bright in fair daylight,
And dares you in your place.

From such as he what man would blanch?
But fearless, eye to eye,
Let hand keep head, or take the worst,
We've only once to die.

The foe to dread is he who comes
In legal forms of fear,
And cuts the tender ties of home,
To brave men's hearts so dear:

To ward this blow the workman stood,
And bravely did his best.
He lost: let men respect the sod
Where he is laid at rest.

For him true labour drops a tear,
And asks if one can tell,
Had Kent a braver man than he
Who perished in the well?

THE MAN OF LEE.

If in your heart of hearts ye hold
An honest man more worth than gold;
If, in this age of sham and cant,
A bit of sterling stuff you want;
If homely truths have charms for thee,
You'll find it in the Man of Lee.

Should fortune frown and care oppress,
And falsehood bring thee great distress;
In such a case, when through thy soul
The stormy tides of passion roll,
When counsel calm would comfort be,
You'll find it in the Man of Lee.

When, in this world's unequal strife,
Despair invades the house of life,
And thou at bay with man and fate,
With wounded pride and godless hate;
When faith would thy salvation be,
You'll find it in the Man of Lee.

Should you, on man's chief end intent,
Have done at last with cent. per cent.;

And would the wholesome lesson learn
To live on what you fairly earn ;
If independence you would see,
You'll find it in the Man of Lee.

If wriggling through the paths of gain
Hath banished joy from heart and brain,
And you would laugh as you have done
When life was youth and youth was fun ;
If still you love bright boyhood's glee,
You'll find it in the Man of Lee.

And if my fancy should incline
Where wisdom's lights in silence shine,
And I should want a living guide
Where devious streams of knowledge glide,
Wise, tender, staunch, from faction free,
Commend me to the Man of Lee.

SONG.

Now the youthful Spring comes tripping o'er the lee,
Meadows spread the green dais out before her,
Primrose and violet round the budding tree,
Crocus and the snowdrop fair.

Who's to be my true love,
Who shall now be mine?
Little birds are asking,
Loving hearts incline.

For now the youthful Spring comes, &c.

See the coming rainbow kyething in the blue,
Blessings on the love-sign, earth rejoicing,
Loving to the earthborn God is ever true,
At his word the seasons play.

Heard ye the cuckoo?
Heard ye the thrush?
Heard ye the blackbird
Whistle through the bush?

For now the youthful Spring comes, &c.

Rising with the laverock, let the soul arise,
Soaring where the dawn breaks forth in glory;
Mingle thy hopes with the fortune of the skies;
Man is not the child of clay.

Sweet in the woodlands,
Soft in the air,
Breathings immortal
Heard everywhere.

For now the youthful Spring comes tripping o'er the lee,
Meadows spread the green dais out before her,
Primrose and violet round the budding tree,
Crocus and the snowdrop fair.

OUR GREAT ENGLAND OVER THE WATER.

BY W. C. BENNETT, THE POET OF KENT.

Two nations? pshaw, nonsense! Two peoples? We're one
By our subject, the sea, tied together;
Through all time, through the future, beneath every sun,
Storm and sunshine, united we'll weather;
The greatness of each shall be gladness to both;
One our language, our glory, our freedom;
If any would part us, for one I'll be loth
To own either England could breed 'em.
So glory to her who our glory shall be,
Our motherland's mightiest daughter!
Every ill may she shun, every good may she see,
Our great England over the water!

They say we grow weaker, more tame, than of old;
You and I, you know, don't quite conceive it;
We're not to take in all the nonsense we're told,
Whoever may will to believe it.
But if ever, as 'twill not, the croak could come true,
Though, like good wine, the older we're stronger,
In the youth of the West we our youth shall renew,
The mightier as we live the longer.

Then here's might to her in whose might ours re-lives,
Our freedom, that we here have taught her:
What a future of greatness to us, boys, she gives,
Our grand England over the water!

What if we've had squabbles? The nearest in blood
Show by tiffs best their love for each other;
But they're fools who on such things are given to brood,
And let coldness divide child and mother;
The quarrels of kinsmen should love but renew,
By the contrast but make it the clearer:
So if we've our tiffs, may they be far and few;
Let them make each to each but the dearer;
Happier, mightier, wiser, each age may both be,
Old England and this her dear daughter!
Hand-in-hand may they on, England this side the sea,
And our great England over the water!

THE YANKEE'S ANSWER TO THE POET OF KENT.

Tew nations! yas, stranger, I reckon we're tew;
Yew can't fix it any how other;
And darn me, old hoss, I should like to hear yew
Call England, Ameriker's mother!
We aint got no mother! I tell yew we riz
By force of our own revolution,
When all-fired Creation got up in a fizz
To jine in with our constitootion!
So don't let a Brittisher rite hi'self tall
By calling Ameriker daughter:
Yew did all ye could to fix Yankees in thrawl,
Till we whip'd yew from this side the water.

We know all this bogus yew talk and yew rite,
Pretending a friendly relation,
Is only because yew're afeard of a fite
With the matchless Amerikan nation;
But yew shall have lightning! by thunder yew shall!
Snakes! how I should like to see flying
The star-spangled banner o'er Monarchy's pall,
And Lunun in red ashes lying;

So don't think yew blind us with buncombe, old Bull,
But take yew good heed what yew're arter;
For Jonathan's not such a tarnation fool
To be gammon'd from yew're side the water.

It raises my dander like pison to see
A worn-out old spec of the ocean,
That sots itself up as immortal and free,
The goddess of freedom's devotion,
Whar cittizens down on thar marowbones go
And slobber the hands that have lick'd 'em.
And proud of the symbols that tyranies show,
Slick o'er thar mantlepiece stick 'em.
So look to yew're fixin's, old cuss, and be quiet,
And don't call Ameriker daughter;
For if ever it comes to a regeler riot,
We'll blow yew clean out of the water!

TOM: THE TOAST OF CHARLTON.

It fell about the time of year
When magpies build and breed
That Tom, the toast of Charlton,
Said, "We must have a feed;

Go, bring my vest that stretches best
When flows the festive wine,
For, by my tip, all at 'The Ship'
My Tories they shall dine."

Up spoke the standard-bearer small,
"My Bart., I'll go with thee;
My knife I'll work, and eke my fork,
For standard-bearer's fee."

Quoth Tom, "'Tis well, and I can tell
Thy maw is rank and strong
To swallow all that may befall
Where Tory topers throng.

Now draw me out a list, a list
Of knaves who are like thee,
Resolved to shout as I give out
For bountith and for fee.

There's Humdale, Dike, and Jock o'Phlem
Shall lead the hungry corps,
With Heron John and Elfistone,
And Captains half-a-score.

Of tailors we can esquires make,
Howe'er their cloth has shrunk,
And I have got a reverend lot
To bless us when we're drunk!"

So at 'The Ship,' by Tom's own tip,
They gathered hundreds three,
And in the hall they one and all
Made boisterous companie.

They ate and drank like Tories bold,
And as the drink ran in
The wit ran out, and aye the shout
Was "Heron Jock must win!"

The captains they talked valiant bosh,
The reverends sang small beer,
But Vanbrugh Goose, when he got loose,
He cackled loud and clear.

And Jamie he koo-too'd to Jock,
And Bill koo-too'd to Tom,
And, tired at last of pure bombast,
They all went rolling home!

This feast took place on Wodensday
In this our year of grace,
By which our poor potwallopers
Did come to evil case.

But Dr. Kar, with skilful aim,
By drafts and pills so blue,
Did countermine, with art divine,
The ills that did ensue.

The standard-bearer, luckless elf,
Had all the slops to clear;
And if the man be still alive,
God's mercy still is here!

WINTER IS RETREATING.

The winter is retreating,
And the little birds are meeting,
With a merry loving greeting,
In the branches of the lime;
Early flowers begin to show,
Bright as gold and white as snow;
But my heart is not aglow
With the sweet reviving time.

For spring can ne'er awaken
Those for whom our hearts are breaking,
Who from loving homes were taken
  Since the summer leaves were green;
And the brightening of the year
Makes remembrance more severe,
While we fondly wish them here
  As in days that we have seen.

Oh, why should mortal sorrow
Be so fain and fond to borrow
Signs of hope's restoring morrow
  From the flowers that quickly pass?
Drawing comfort as we may
From such ministers as they,
While ourselves we fade away
  Like the shadows from the grass?

THE SIGNALMAN.

Out through the darkness nearing, nearing,
He hails the signs of the train appearing.
Hark! how the sound of its fiery flight
Startles the echoes at quiet midnight.

Mountain to mountain, astonished, doth call;
The deer in the bracken, the steed in the stall,
Tremble, affrighted, as, down through the strath,
It comes, it comes on the iron path.

All right, by his saving light; 'tis pass'd,
And the flame of its breath on the night outcast,;
Under the brae, that yawns like hell,
It is gone, it is gone, with a smothered yell.

And thus, while the hours in silence glide,
And sleep's dull sea flows in full tide,
He marks the meteors that come and go,
In the heaven above and the earth below.

And into the future nearing, nearing,
He hails the sign of the time appearing,
When war shall be crush'd, in his crimson'd team,
By the spirit that rules the power of steam.

GREENWICH.

With all thy woodlands flowering,
Thy palace homes embowering,
High o'er the river towering,
Shining where ye stand;
The river at thy feet
Sees nothing so complete,
Where strength and beauty meet,
Smiling hand in hand.

The navies past thee flowing,
With seaward breezes blowing,
Recount thy glories glowing,
And call thee seaman's rest;
And as the homeward sail
Bends to the welcome gale,
Thy domes afar they hail,
Bright gleaming in the west.

Afar they see thee glancing,
With wavelets round thee dancing,
The thoughts of home enhancing,
By memories of the brave,
Who, free from scorn and skaith,
Held stainless England's faith,
Through danger and through death,
Victorious o'er the wave.

A CHRISTMAS HYMN.

STILL shines the star with peerless ray
That rose on Bethlem's plain,
And ever blessed be the day
We welcome once again.
Praise to the Lord for Jesu's grace,
In Him we see our Father's face.

All souls receive the light divine
That shines for evermore,
And every household is a shrine,
Where grateful hearts adore.
Praise to the Lord for Jesu's love,
Our Father reigns in Heaven above.

The loved ones lost to mortal sight
With us rejoice to-day;
For in the realms of endless light
Life never knows decay.
Praise to the Lord for Jesu's joy,
One song the heavens and earth employ.

Immortal in the midst of death,
Through love of Jesus Christ,
This day renews our hope and faith,
And joins us with the blest.

Praise to the Lord for Jesu's joy,
That change or death can ne'er destroy.

Still shines the star with peerless ray
That rose on Bethlem's plain;
And ever blessed be the day
We welcome once again.
Praise to the Lord for Jesu's grace,
In Him we see the Father's face.

POLLY'S LULLABY.

The pussy's gone to rest
In the little doggie's nest,
And doggie must watch till day,
While the lambs on the hill
With their dams lie still,
And their little noses nestled in the hay.
Oh, Polly, dear Polly, wee Polly mine!
There's a kind, kind eye
Keeping watch in the sky,
Though the sun hath ceased to shine.

There's a cannie bird that sings
On his downie grey wings,
'Tween the earth and heaven so high,
He'll be up singing clear;
But his voice you winna hear
If you dinna go to sleep by and by.
Sweet Polly, dear Polly, wee Polly mine!
There's a kind, kind eye
Keeping watch in the sky,
Though the sun hath ceased to shine.

Then close thy sleepy e'e
Like the gowan on the lee,
For shades of the evening fall,
And hush thee to rest
On thy own mamma's breast,
For the Father he loveth us all.
Dear Polly, wee Polly, sweet Polly mine!
There's a kind, kind eye
Keeping watch in the sky,
Though the sun hath ceased to shine.

TO MY BROTHER TOM,

ON VISITING THE AULD HAME.

HERE now a stranger's fire doth burn,
Here now a stranger's children play;
There's scarce a vestige of the wreck
Of childhood's dim romantic day.

I wonder where the cradle's gone,
It was for twins both long and wide,
Where, as the wintry winds did moan,
We warmly slumbered side by side.

Around our homestead, bleak and high,
The wintry storms did rave and shout;
But, 'neath dear mother's careful eye,
What cared we for the world without?

Alas the change! when boyhood came,
Then ruin clomb our native hill,
We, like a nest of timorous game,
Lay open to her spiteful will.

Then, scattered far athwart the wild,
We never all did meet again;
Poor mother mourned her household spoiled,
And strove her treasures to retain.

'Twas vain: some crossed the Atlantic sea,
Some laid them down in lasting sleep:
More favoured they than you and me,
Who o'er life's sorrows wake and weep.

AN EPISTLE TO GORDON HEPBURN.

God guide ye weil, my worthy frere,
Your letter comes my heart to cheer;
For I am under hiding here,
Frae lawyers' clutches,
And oot o' house I dar' na steer,
Confound the wretches!

Like some pair tod to covert driven,
I have na seen the light o' heaven,
And had na grace to me been given,
The week that's past,
The great commandment I had riven,
And blawn my blast.

To think that I should be sae harassed,
Sae winded, worried and embarrassed,
Like ootlawed badger o' the forest,
For paltry cash,
And forced to thole—ah, that's the sorest!
Unfreendly snash!

Were I a rantin' spendthrift loon,
A whiskey-birlin' rake-the-toon,
I micht expect that, late or soon,
I'd get a skite,
But weil ye ken that noo I'm doon
Wi' Fortune's spite.

There's Grant, the Lord forgie him for 't,
At me has gi'en a hieland snort,
And blamed me for yon evening's sport,
When ye were frisky,
When fist on nose gae free retort,
Inspired by whiskey.

A generous chiel will never strike
The man wha's back is at the dyke;
Howe'er sae muckle he dislike,
The fist's withdrawn;
He's but an ill-spun niderin tyke
That hits the fa'n.

But, by my sang, they're sair mistaen
Wha think I'll never rise again;
I'm parritch-fed and at the bane
Hae Scotland's cast,
And, lang as I can stand alane,
I'll face the blast.

I'm come o' hardy border clan,
Wha foot to foot and man to man,
Aye in the battle's foremost van
Bore bravely through,
And keepit what their valour wan,
Wi' courage true.

But, leaving forbears oot o' sicht,
Black curses rest upon that nicht
When ye did thrash the cabman wicht,
Black nicht o' losses;
Sure some unchancy steller licht
Shed balefu' crosses.

The cabman tint his precious blude,
I tint Grant's favour past remeid,
You tint the bonnet aff yer heid,
Glengarry braw,
That bobbit aye in time o' need
Aboon them a'.

My curse! na, faith, I'll curse nae mair,
Yet maun I rue yon evening sair;
It brought me muckle present care,
And after dool,
And made me look, I do declare,
Like feckless fule.

Let Geordie Wilson tune his drone
To some auld music-murmur'd moan,
That tells o' human hopes o'erthrown,
And laid in clay,
Where lately they in beauty shone,
As bright as day.

I ettled fair them a' to please,
An' up my flounderin' fortune's heeze;
Instead o' that, by some degrees,
I have been lowered;
Indeed, my friend, the truth to seize,
I'm fairly floored.

LINES TO A POETIC FRIEND IN SORROW.

Written on Christmas Morn, 1863.

This morn, to love and friendship dear,
So sad to thee this closing year,
This morn to thee I dedicate,
To thee and to thy faithful mate,
Who, on this day of Jesus Christ,
With sorrow keepeth mournful tryst,
Beside the moaning ocean wave,
By dear wee Milly's early grave.
The boundless sea is like thy pain,
It ebbs and flows, and comes again,
As fond rememb'rance restless strays
O'er all her winsome childish ways,—
The words, the looks, the nameless grace,—
That lately filled thy dwelling-place;
But He who holds the waves in thrawl,
The Mighty One, the All in All,
Can still the tempest of thy grief,
And bring thy tortured soul relief.
Ah, dear! my friends, who e'er can know
The mystery of this mortal woe?

With anguished minds we pray, we strive
To save the lovèd ones alive;
And hard it is to kiss the hand
That leads them to the better land,
And sore for flesh and blood to thole
The rending of the heart and soul;
But this I must and this thou must,
And give our dearest to the dust.
Who knows what pale-faced sorrow means,
Cold gliding through life's various scenes?
This moment withering hopes elate,
That blossomed in the highest state;
The next, in Poet's humble shed,
Bent tearful o'er his youthful dead!
No voice in nature e'er betrays
The secret of the Father's ways;
No whisper yet was ever heard,
Not even by inspirèd bard,
To tell why fairest things should die,
And tears bedim affection's eye,
Or give poor hope one slender path
Across the mirksome stream of death.
But through the ages, dim and far,
Shines forth one peerless, radiant star,
That now, with still-increasing light,
Illumes the darkness of our night:
This morn beheld that star ascend,
To set no more till time shall end,—

A symbol bright of love divine,
Immortal life for thine and mine.
Dear friend, these thoughts thy heart imbue,
These thoughts thy faith and hope renew;
So may this grief a blessing prove,
Through God the Father's boundless love.

THE HALF-BROTHERS.

On London Bridge the tide of life
Had fairly homeward set,
And lulled awhile commercial strife;
The night was cold and wet.

Within yon harbour of distress,
Beside the slippery pave,
Deep in the stony cold recess,
There slept a little knave.

His hungered face was wan and white,
Pale as the moon that shed,
Through drifting clouds, a fitful light
Upon his poor wee head.

Rolled up in sleep was houseless Tom,
Like master's dog that lay,
Soft on the downy rug at home,
Now tired with sport and play.

Clutched firmly in his sleeping fist
Was Tommy's stock and store,
A fusee-box, and well I wist
'Twas that and nothing more.

Now, from a calculation rough,
By that which hath been said,
A fusee-box is scarce enough
To start a London trade.

And tiny Tom—this was the worst,
With competition high—
In hustling crowd was ne'er the first
To catch the smoker's eye.

And so it came, that night so rude,
Sleep hunger drove away,
And, dreaming of a crust of food,
On London Bridge he lay.

In master's villa, just a drive,
An easy drive from town,
On that same eve was born alive
A son, his joys to crown,

The master was a joyful man
To welcome son and heir,
So like himself the darling one,
The gossips all declare.

Yet might the master, heartless elf,
Have seen, as he went home,
A truer likeness of himself
In starving, houseless Tom!

ON THE DEATH OF PETER R.

[The subject of the following lines, who died in the flower of his youth, was wont to call Scotch whiskey "a snifter." Wit, love, friendship, and universal charity somehow were constantly associated in his mind with "sniftering,"—a great mistake.]

He was a bright and loving soul;
Than fire his wit was swifter.
I hope, whatever be his goal,
He'll never want a "snifter."

He might have been a better man,
Existence here completer;
But God himself laid down the plan,
And He'll be kind to Peter.

If gathering geer be man's chief end,
Then Peter was a blunder;
For he was prone to give and spend,
And saving he called "plunder."

But friendship's tie he dearly prized,
And this was his undoing,
For when with "mountain dew" baptized
It led him on to ruin.

We're not so sure that Peter's fault
Was all his own invention;
Nor can we prove that "death by mault"
Was his precise intention.

For he whose memory children love
Was good and tender-hearted;
And better folks, in heaven above,
May meet the poor departed.

A WISH.

If Time will only leave me this,
The riches of the home and heart,
I'll count upon my happiness,
Though wayward fortune's smiles depart.

I've seen the face of loveless pride,
And scarce a gleam of light was there,
But marks of sadness side by side
With wasting footprints of despair.

And I have noticed poortith's face,
Illumed with love's restoring ray,
Beam like the glory and the grace
That fall from heaven at break of day.

For on this love-knit scene of life
The loving man hath least to fear,
If gifted with a faithful wife,
And in his home her children dear.

Then I shall prize with constant mind
The one who keeps my home for me,
And deem her best of human kind,
The loveliest and the fairest she.

And if the Lord of light and love
Will kindly spare my love for life,
I'll trust all blessings from above
Shall crown the faithful mother-wife.

For surely good from goodness flows,
As fruit from blossoms in their time;
And hope a gladsome harvest shows
In wedded love's most blessed clime.

AN EPISTLE TO W. C. BENNETT.

Dear Poet, now the Spring is here,
With woodlands green and skies so clear,
Now we can through the meadows steer
And pu' the gowan,
And Nature's sweet wee songsters hear
Where streams are rowin'.

I ken your heart, like mine, is fain
To breathe the wholesome Spring again;
To us her flowers are greater gain
Than gold in bank,
The silver on her emerald train
More dear than rank.

How pleasant, in the morn of May,
Up Eltham's wooded heights to stray,
And see the landscape blend in gray
Far o'er the down,
To mark the morning glint and play
On tower and town;

Or, from the crest of Shooter's Hill,
When rolling Thames her harbours fill,
To see the sun his glory spill
On verge o' night,
When London's spires and steeples thrill
With golden light.

And if by fortune vexed and cross'd,
On stormy tides of passion toss'd,
How sweet at eve, in woodland lost,
To calm the mind;
To reckon up the pride and boast
Of human kind;

To note how simple Nature round,
'Neath whispering boughs, by form and sound,
Imparts her wisdom, more profound
Than man can teach;
The very flowers that gem the ground
Man's ways impeach:

She seems to say to you and me,
"Why should you rank in their degree?"
Who strive and strain the first to be
For power and wealth;
"So long as you are fond o' me,"
And ha'e your health;

"For all their ruggin' and their reivin',
That's little else than downright thievin';
They get for wages only grievin',
Black care and strife;
And in their course behind them leavin'
The life o' life."

The poets have been counted daft,
Elf shotten through in woof and waft,
For aye declaring mammon's craft
Is deil's delusion,
That leads ye on, by stages saft,
To dire confusion.

I dinna ken, I ne'er could match
The silliest soul a fule might hatch,
At ony wee bit worldly catch
Within my grip;
A babe in business aye might snatch
It frae my lip.

Be this or not an omen true,
Or fault o' mine to madness due,
I'd rather cast my lot wi' you,
Poetic dreamers,
Than mate wi' fortune's favoured few
Successful schemers.

But whist! I had forgotten quite,
No more the poets shun the light,
Nor seek the friendly shades o' night
Wi' threadbare vest,
But where the fashion at its height
Shines wi' the best.

They ha'e their villas and their wine,
Their parks, and lawns, and gardens fine;
While to the music of their line
The sovereigns jingle;
And thus the human and divine
So sweetly mingle.

By signs like these, alas! I fear,
I'm doomed to be an outcast here;
For, like the birds, from year to year
I live and sing,
And if the season be severe
It chills my wing.

But though the seasons changeful be,
From wintry moans to spring-time glee,
Dear Poet, with such friends as thee,
I'll fear nae ill,
For through life's worst extremity
Thou'rt constant still.

ON THE DEATH OF A BROTHER'S CHILD,

Who died at Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Wee Willie's dead and gone;
Sorely I repine
To leave the blossom of my life
Beside the coaly Tyne.

Mother loved him tenderly,
Father nothing less,
Angels, loving better still,
Carried him to bliss.

Changèd were his ruby lips,
Changèd was his brow,
Changèd were his cherry cheeks:
Not my Willie now.

In my arms I held him close,
Fondly, fondly prest
Only cold and lifeless clay
On my anguished breast.

Never shall I leave the land
Dear by sorrow made;
England mine for evermore,
Where my darling's laid.

Oh, my Willie's dead and gone;
Sorely I repine
To leave the blossom of my life
Beside the coaly Tyne.

THE AULD KIRK-BELL.

THE auld kirk-bell, the auld kirk-bell,
It had na' muckle music in't,
It had nae solemn swell,
Its peevish voice gaed linkin'
O'er the meadow and the fell;
I'll ne'er forget the clinkin'
O' the auld kirk-bell.

The kirk stood on a windy know,
And blinkit through the trees
A weathercockie turned his neb
To every changing breeze,
And every Sabbath morning,
Wi' dour unchanging knell,
Auld Johnnie rang damnation
On the auld kirk-bell.

The faithers and the mothers then,
Wi' solemn steps and slow,
Led up their wretched offspring,
To hear their doom of woe,

Through blessed waving fields o' corn,
That other tales did tell,
While Johnnie ruggit grimly
At the auld kirk-bell.

The dead lay round and round the kirk,
Our forbears and our kin,
A' mouldering there, as we were told,
The punishment o' sin;
The minister improved the case,
And said the vaults o' hell
Are crammed wi' proud despisers
O' the auld kirk-bell.

The minister has passed away,
There's flowers upon his head;
They wrote "Here lies a godly man,"
Upon his coffin-lid.
He thought it right to frighten us;
He did his duty well;
But I wadna like my weans to hear
The auld kirk-bell.

SHOEING THE DEAD.

When warnings come, let ilka chield,
Whose heart to sin is prone to yield,
Take home the lesson to himsel',
And to his bairns the moral tell;
So may the rising generation
Be keepit aye frae vile temptation:
So may both old and young tak' heed
To deal as fairly by the deid
As if they still were in the strife
And bruilzie of this mortal life:
To cheat them is a mortal sin;
For seldom back to earth they win,
To see fair play and punish thievin',
Which to an injured soul is grievin':
But when they come, as you shall hear,
They mak' the guilty quake for fear,
Wi' vengeance sudden and severe.

In Selkirk toon, on Ettrick side
(Their fame's been sounded far and wide),
There wons a clan o' souters gude,
Who round King James at Flodden stude,
And when the fearsome die was cast
They came out frae the battle's blast

Sore rent and torn, but home they bore,
Deep-dyed wi' bravest foemens' gore;
A banner they wi' pride display,
In memory of that gallant fray,
And cry, wi' cheering crowds attendant,
"Selkirk for ever, and independent!"

Ane o' the craft, called Davie Hume,
At sic-like times wud fret and gloom,
And say, he'd "Scripture warrant for't,
That they wha did wi' arms consort,
To shed their neighbour's precious blude,
Wad never come to ony gude;
But as King James did lose his life,
So wad all men of sturt and strife
Ha'e meted out, by heaven's decree,
Tooth for a tooth and e'e for e'e."
Then wad he clench his fist, and sweer
That a' life's evils, far and near,
Shot up frae a'e corrupted spring,
The worship o' the priest and king;
Then would he, in the quiet back raw,
All by himsel' his lingle draw,
And, as his neighbours' joyfu' din
Would through his winnock on him win,
He'd muttering say, "Daft, senseless rabble!
O' Flodden Field they'll roar and gabble,

And carry round that tattered rag,
Wi' drums and fifes and noise and brag,
As if it were some covenant plan
Conferring equal rights on man.
The de'il may care; e'en let them rout;
Its gude for trade when fules rin out."
He ended aye his spitefu' blether
By saying, "Ah! there's nought like leather,"
Regardless of the generous glow
That honest working bodies know
When thinking o' their patriot sires,
Wha, cheek by jowl wi' lords and squires,
Stood by the King in time o' need,
And showed what souters' wives can breed.

Oh, wae's me for that creature's heart
That has nae sympathetic part
In auld heroic faith and dreams,
In wean's and women's silly schemes,
In life's bit passing sports and whims;
But, in its cankered husky shell,
Has faith alone in what will sell:
Of such the de'il mak's special prey,
They're never safe by night or day,
He cleeks them in their ain device,
And sells them at their market price;
And so to Davie Hume it fell,
As I ha'e heard my grannie tell.

In sleep aulk Selkirk lay entranced;
On carter haugh the spunkie danced;
Thin as lost love the moon's pale beam
Fell flickerin' in the Ettrick stream;
Around the kirkyard on the brae
A sacred, solemn silence lay:
The night a soft communion bred
Between the living and the dead;
The death in life, the life in death,
Was sundered only by a breath.

But Davie Hume, on gain intent,
Shared not this holy sacrament;
His lamp-light through his window streamed,
Where night-hauks danced and whirred and gleamed;
While he, bent o'er his work within,
Outraged the peace wi' knockin' din,
Not for his weans, not for his wife,
For none had he to bless his life;
For self alone, all for himself,
Through midnight toiled the earth-worm elf,
Pleased in the thoughts that greed unfold,
That while sleep o'er his neighbours rolled,
The barren night should yield him gold;
He leuch and made his lapstane jerk,
Till, 'tween the head-stanes and the kirk,
He raised an echo strange and drear;

He paused and held his breath to hear;
He ken'd some eerie thing drew near.
Swith at the tirlin' o' the pin
An unco' face cam' glowerin' in.
"Gude man! I could na' sleep a wink,
Sae loud I heard yer hammer clink,
And then I saw yer window blink;
I ha'e a lang, lang road to gang,
And if ye be nae unco' thrang,
And winna keep me waitin' lang,
And keep yer word when a' is dune,
I'll ha'e frae you a pair a' shoon,
Weil welted, mind, and fit for weir;
And as I am a stranger here,
I'll pay yer price doon on the nail;
But tak' gude care and dinna fail
To ha'e them done to-morrow night,
A wee before the spring o' light;
Your foot, I see, is just like mine;
Your measure, Carle, will fit me fine."
In pouch he then set siller clinkin',
That set the souter's een a-blinkin',
And, though he shivered through and through,
He drove a bargain like a screw,
And promised there, the morn's night,
A wee before the spring o' light,
The shoon would be to order made,
As gude as ony in the trade.

To put his wages in a clout
The souter turned him round about,
And when he turned himsel' again
The unco' man was fairly gane,
And he was standing all alane.

Right glad was he when morning broke,
And roused the early labouring folk;
He heard their footsteps pass his door
Wi' feelings never felt before;
Sleep fled, like timorous frightened doo
When corbie skims the woodland through;
As day drew on he in the street
Would crack wi' ony one he'd meet;
And when beside his ain door-stane
He geed a bawbee to a wean.
The woman said, "Gude guide us weil,
But Davie's surely seen the de'il."
The silly creatures oft divine
The truth wi' instinct rare and fine:
A woman sees wi' clearest een
When cluttie comes upon the scene:
This gift she has, as man can tell
Who trusts and treats her fair and well.
It might be rash for me to say
Their mothers' auld remembrance may
Rin in their blude this very day;

But mony a man can weil attest,
A loving woman counsels best
When by temptation sorely pressed.

Had woman's love been Davie's guard,
He might ha'e been frae evil spared,
Till, wi' his bairns and oes around him,
Death, like a kindly friend, had found him:
The kirk in prayers should constant be
For wifeless men on land and sea.

'Twere hard to tell how Davie's mind
To keep his promise disinclined,
Yet, urged by fear, did swerve and sway
Through all the forenoon o' that day,
Till warning shadows plainly told
That past meridian Earth had rolled,
And Time, in his resistless flight,
Was pointing westward to the night,
The night that from its darksome den,
When sleep fell on the sons o' men,
Would send that eerie glowerin' Carle,
It might be, frae the nether warl'.

"The man," quoth he, "spak' fair enough;
I could na' treat him rude and rough,
And fling his siller in his face,
And he a stranger in the place;

I wish, though, I had louted doon
And ta'en the measure o' his shoon ;
He said that I could fit him fine
By makin' his the same as mine ;
But strange it is, beyond dispute,
That he should ken sae weil aboot
The mak' and measure o' my foot! "

Thought speeds the work, the elshin glanced,
And right and left the lingle danced,
Till, 'neath the souter's skilfu' hand,
Stout, firm and neat, and nicely plan'd,
The shoon were to the promise made,
As gude as ony in the trade ;
And just before the spring o' day,
On Ettrick hills, began to play,
Swith at the tirlin' o' the pin,
The customer cam' glowerin' in.
Thought Davie, " Noo his feet I'll scan ;"
But he was boggled in his plan ;
Ere ever he had time to lout
The lamp burned low and then gaed oot,
And as the gleam the darkness swallowed
The man was gane ; the souter followed,
By mad desire to know possessed ;
Hard up the raw he onward press'd,
Till, 'tween the head-stanes and the kirk,
The figure vanished in the mirk,

Where yarrow-flower and ragwort wave
Aboon a long-forgotten grave.
The souter stuck his awl therein,
And hameward for a spade did rin.
Day-dawn the desperate body found
Up to his neck in sacred ground;
Regardless he o' skull and bane,
He howkit deep wi' might and main;
And in the grave, a fathom doon,
His spade struck on a pair o' shoon,
His ain hands' work, the very pair
That cost so muckle thought and care!
He should have gone and left them there;
But greed prevailed: he took them hame.
Oh, Davie! ye were sair to blame;
Nae tenderness for deid folks' dealings,
Nor yet regard for honest feelings;
The price was paid, the bargain just;
Ye should ha'e keepit faith and trust;
O'er rash ye were thus to presume
Upon the silence of the tomb.

The day that followed passed in clouds;
They, scudding, flew like riven shrouds:
And as the evening darkness fell
The rattling rain cam' doon pell-mell;
The woods o' Hainen bent and roared;
Frae bank to brae the Ettrick poured;

Auld Selkirk rockit to the blast,
Wi' flames o' lightning round her cast.
When midnight came the storm was passed.
Then was there seen, in the back raw,
'Mong souters ane and souters a',
The blackened corpse o' David Hume,
Stretched girnin' in his ain wee room!
There were the marks o' fearfu' strife,
As if the creature fought for life
Wi' some dread power he could na' see.
The case was plain as plain could be:
Wrapt in the tempest of the night,
The injured spirit claimed his right,
And killed the souter dead with fright!

SONG.

I'm weary, I'm weary,
I'm weary all the day;
The only love I ever loved
Has sailed himself away.

I'm lonely, I'm lonely,
I'm lonely all the night ;
For the only love I'll ever love
Has cursed me in his flight.

He's left me, he's left me
A baby and a ring ;
The first he is my darling ;
The second I will fling
After him, oh after him,
Far in the changeful sea,
For it could not bind my fickle love
To baby and to me.

Ye waters, ye waters,
Ye waters swelling high,
Oh, spare my baby's father
When dangers round him fly ;
He may return, he may return
Across the raging main,
And yet may love me for myself,
And not for gold and gain.

GREE, BAIRNIES, GREE.

The wee bit whistlin' birdie
Has gorblins in the nest;
She haps them wi' her sprekled wings,
And whistles them to rest;
Her bonnie voice, at morn and e'en,
Comes sweetly frae the tree,
And Willie winkie kens her sang
As weil as you or me;
For the wee bit whistlin' birdie sings
Gree, bairnies, gree.

The wee bit cheepin' moosie
It lives among the grass;
Its wee bit heart goes pit-a-pat
To hear the callants pass,
For it has wee bit helpless things,
As helpless as can be;
And Andrew kens the paukie loon
Her cheep, as weil as me;
For the wee bit cheepin' moosie cheeps
Gree, bairnies, gree.

The wee bit brattlin' burnie,
When summer days are high,
A lookin'-glass for laverocks
When they come frae the sky;
It laughs to see a curly pow
Come toddling o'er the lee,
And my wee gentle Jessie kens
Her sang as weil as me;
For the wee bit brattlin' burnie sings
Gree, bairnies, gree.

TO MY FRIEND THE DOCTOR.

Doctor, dear, I want to know
How the public pulses go.
Will the patient yet retain
Aught that's wholesome, simple, plain?
Doth spasmodic inflammation
Still afflict the British nation?
Must the tap be Tennysonian,
And the pap be Tupperonian?
Or with Swinburne is the feeling
Through the midnight chamber stealing,
Quivering 'tween the floor and ceiling?

Doctor, dear, I want to know
How the public pulses go.
Must a singer, wanting place
In the saving public grace,
After brooding introspection,
Give a clinical dissection
Of the viscera and vitals,
Giving pretty-sounding titles
To corruption and disease,
Squeamish fashion's taste to please?
Shall we give a painted story
Like the stagy Frenchman Dorée?
Must our models be distorted,
From the schools of vice imported,
Here a feature overcharged,
There a muscle much enlarged?
Shall we, wrapped in mute devotion,
Stand before a painted ocean,
And, in presence of the deep,
Sip our wine and go to sleep?
Shall a sculptured baby charm us,
And with nameless rapture warm us,
While we, in the street, despise
Real babes with wond'rous eyes,
Staring at us with surprise?
Doctor, dear, I want to know
How the public pulses go.

Shall we sing the rule of many,
Or the rule of titled zany?
Shall we go for reformation
With a decent moderation,
Or apply decisive lance,
As they do in frantic France,
Rashly cutting, void of grace,
Off the nose to spite the face?
Doctor, I have known you long.
Firm in friendship, true and strong,
Head so clear and skilful eye,
Life's illusions to thee lie
Open as the noonday sky;
Well I know you'll ne'er deceive me,
Nor with false conclusions grieve me;
Then before I trembling bring,
From my little rustic spring,
All I have to offer up,
In a very homely cup,
Doctor, dear, I want to know
How the public pulses go.

NOTES.

Note I.

COODAILY.

(Page 1).

"Coodaily was this youth, from Falkirk plain,
By birth and lineage a fremit Scot."

It is a tradition in the Coodaily family that their common progenitor was from the wilds of Galloway, the inhabitants of which were of old called "fremit" or strange Scots. The name itself arose from the generous style of housekeeping established by the original head of the family, who every day in the week, except Sunday, slaughtered a coo — Anglicè an ox — for home consumption. The unfortunate hero of the Poem was endowed with a remarkable share of his great ancestor's love of good eating, without a corresponding provision being vouchsafed for the indulgence thereof.

Note II.

THE CENTENARY OF BURNS.

(Page 32).

"Poor as I am, 'twould be no work of mine,
On such a day, to serve at mammon's shrine."

The same evening that witnessed Miss Isa Craig's triumph at the Crystal Palace, where she carried off the Centenary Prize Poem from six hundred poetical competitors, found the author engaged at St. Martin's Hall in delivering his musical entertainment entitled "A Nicht wi' Burns." In the course of the evening he recited the poem in which occur the above lines. On the day following the 'Times' quoted passages from the poem, and the 'Musical World' expressed an opinion to the effect that Angus Fairbairn's poem was equal, if not superior, to that which gained the prize, at the same time pointing out the difference between poetical precept and example, inasmuch as the poet, while denouncing mammon-worship in his rhymes, was actually worshipping at the shrine of the golden deity. It is a curious fact that, after paying all expenses, although the assembly was crowded, the author was out of pocket to the extent of twelve shillings and sixpence on that memorable evening.

Note III.

A MEETING OF "FRIENDS."

(Page 46).

"And I was with a silent band
Who waited on the Lord."

I believe there is not a sect of Christians so little given to proselytizing as the Society of Friends, or Quakers, as they are

usually termed; and it certainly was not in that spirit that one came to me when, in my young days, I lived on the Hill of Moncrief, near Perth, and invited me to attend a meeting in the fair city.

In the decline of a lovely summer evening I found the little company assembled in a large apartment overhanging the River Tay, at the foot of Kinnouil. We sat in silence very likely for the space of an hour, when up rose a venerable gentlewoman and discoursed on the beauty of holiness, in a strain never to be forgotten, but totally impossible to describe: the clear, musical voice and the heaven-inspired countenance dwell in memory as those belonging to Lydia Barclay, the descendant of Barclay of Ury, the author of 'An Apology for the Quakers.' Amid the deepening shades of gloamin' I departed, and saw that company no more; but ever since then I have entertained sentiments of respect and veneration for the Society of Friends.

Note IV.

MONA'S COMPLAINT.

(Page 51).

"Her Hope has turned her enemy,
An' sworn her end."

Many years ago, when on a professional visit to the Isle of Man, the whole place was in a commotion regarding certain fiscal arrangements, as I understood, inaugurated by the Governor, Sir Something Hope. It was feared, if these arrangements were carried out, the interests of the beautiful little island would be seriously injured, by preventing visitors making the sea-side towns their summer residence. The Com-

plaint appeared in the local newspaper, with the following choice bit of Scotch, from the pen of the editor himself:—

"A wee bit o' laddie frae the lan' o' cakes has drap'd doon amang us, an' tuned the pipes o' oor dool unko' weel. We dinna' misdoot the nots frae the wee bit o' laddie will soon braly o'er oor heathery hills."

Note V.

AN EPISTLE TO GORDON HEPBURN.

(Page 81).

"You lost the bannet aff yer head,
Glangarry braw,
That bobbit aye in time o' need,
Aboon them a'."

There exists in London at the present time a body of gentlemen, honourably designated The Club of True Highlanders, whose bond of union is something better than mere nationality, though that is not a bad thing for generous souls. The Club of True Highlanders exists for the purpose of alleviating distress, and rendering assistance to those who are engaged in the struggle of life in London but scantily furnished with necessary means. Some members of the Club are excellent dancers, and all of them wear the Highland costume on special occasions. At my annual benefits, in past years, I have been deeply indebted to certain gentlemen of the Club, who never failed to assist me by personal service in Highland reels and strathspeys, a kind of performance which money will not always purchase in London, and which in my case was always tendered for love. One unfortunate benefit-night, after leaving my house at a late hour, a difficulty arose between the cabman and my Highlanders. The cabman (a most respectable member of his order) insulted a Highlander. The mountaineer forthwith knocked the cabman

down. The beginning of the quarrel is involved in mystery, but the Highlanders were compelled to walk to London through the heavy rain, and all the blame fell upon me: by a pardonable poetic license, I in turn transferred the blame to John Barleycorn. "The woman beguiled me, and I did eat."—*Adam.*

Note VI.

ON THE DEATH OF A BROTHER'S CHILD.

(Page 96).

The death of little Willie was attended by one of those omens which philosophy rejects with contempt, but which nevertheless finds believers amongst people who cannot fairly be called superstitious: at the very time the child died, his brother (himself a very small boy) met an appearance, in the lane near the churchyard, exactly like the dead; it was crying bitterly, and the brother, crying in sympathy, inquired kindly what was the matter: the poor little apparition pointed to the churchyard and vanished.

Note VII.

THE AULD KIRK-BELL.

(Page 98).

"And every Sabbath morning,
Wi' dour unchanging knell,
Auld Johnnie rang damnation
On the auld kirk-bell."

Standing pleasantly on rising ground, not far from where my father's little farm reared its modest homestead, stood the parish kirk, a place of punishment for little people who, like

myself in those early days, were not able to resolve its awful doctrines, and yet were feelingly alive to its terrible Calvanistic pictures of retribution.

In winter, when the little birds' nebs were sticking to the trees with frost, the bell seemed to me in unison with cruelty and desolation; but on balmy summer mornings its harsh pertinacious voice seemed to be scolding the birds for singing and the corn for rustling, as we passed through the fields like a little band of condemned criminals. How the minister could ever smile upon earth, after what he had been saying, was to me a profound mystery. I have since learned that, to many people, there is a mysterious and intense enjoment in looking forward to the fearful uncertainties of a terrible future.

Note VIII.

SHOEING THE DEAD.

(Page 100).

"In Selkirk toon, on Ettrick side,
(Their fame's been sounded far and wide),
There wons a clan o' souter's gude,
Who round King James at Flodden stude."

It is not probable that the souter, who, according to the legend, followed his customer to the kirkyard and robbed him of his shoes, was a genuine descendant of the gallant souters who fought at Flodden; more likely he was some interloper who possessed a portion of the manual skill without sharing the high principle of the celebrated craftsmen of the back raw. For the legend upon which the poem is found see 'Chambers' Journal.'

E. NEWMAN, PRINTER, DEVONSHIRE STREET, BISHOPSGATE.

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